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passed when that deputation met him. And I shall be happy to give the honourable member separately further information on the subject if he so desires."

Sriman Biswanath Das :—"I shall be very glad if the honourable member would take action upon it."

The Hon'ble the President :—"Do I understand the honourable member to say that he was in possession of the information for which he had asked? The question is to ask the Hon'ble the Home Member if it is a fact that the Oriya District Association of Ganjām waited in deputation on the Agency Commissioner in September 1920 or thereabouts. Was the Honourable Member in possession of that information before he asked the question?"

Sriman Biswanath Das :—"Of course I had some idea of it."

The Hon'ble the President :—"The purpose of interpellating the Government is to ask for information. In this particular case the honourable member's intention was to ask what action had been taken upon the deputies' representation. The question should have taken some such form as: 'With reference to the deputation I desire to know what action has been taken up to now.' Ordinarily when honourable members have the information, it is better to put the question in such a form as to lead the Government on to the answer. Otherwise there is just this contingency. The Government may say 'We have no information,' and the honourable member would have to put a supplementary question. If honourable members put the Government in possession of the information they have, it will facilitate the disposal of questions materially."

Sriman Biswanath Das :—"I think, Sir, I may be allowed to add one word of personal explanation. I approached one or two official gentlemen and they said that they did not know anything. So I was anxious to know whether the Government knew anything at all about it."

The Hon'ble the President :—"It is far from my intention to suggest that the honourable member has done anything wrong. I simply suggested to him a certain procedure for the purpose of facilitating work."

Smuggling of gold.

462 Q.—Mr. B. P. Devarajulu Nayudu : To ask the Hon'ble the Member for Finance whether—

(*a*) it is true that certain insured parcels which were declared to contain gold jewellery and were passed at the Colombo Post Office for delivery in Karikal in French India were seized in March 1919 at Dhanushkodi, and acquired by the Collector of Customs, Madras, under the Gold Import Act, 1917 ;

(*b*) such seizure and acquisition are contrary to rule 31, clause 7, of the rules and notification in Appendix B framed under the Sea Customs Act VIII of 1878, as amended by Acts IV and XII of 1914 ;

(*c*) under article 93 of the Post Office Guide, such parcels should be returned to the place of origin if they are deliverable in British India ;

(*d*) it is not true in the present cases of nearly 30 parcels seized they are deliverable out of British India where they are not so prohibited ;

(*e*) it is true that the Government refused to pay the then market value of the gold seized, viz., Rs. 17 in March 1919 per sovereign, but paid the foreign addressees only Rs. 10¼ per sovereign ; and

(*f*) it is true that the petitions of protest of such addressees were dismissed by the Board of Revenue and the Government of Madras, and their notices of civil suit were discarded.

A.—The member is referred to the answer to question No. 345 which was laid on the table on the 21st February last.

Draughtsmen establishment in Public Works Department.

463 Q.—Mr. B. P. DEVARAJULU NAYUDU : To ask the Hon'ble the Member for Revenue and the Hon'ble the Minister for Education (Public Works)—

(*a*) if it is a fact that in the reorganization of the draughtsmen establishment in 1913 the number of appointments in the higher grade was reduced, and that, in consequence, persons drawing pay higher than that which they were entitled to according to the reorganization were allowed to draw the excess as personal allowance;

(*b*) if it is a fact that the Chief Engineer in 1916 informed the members of the above establishment that proposals for further reorganization of the draughtsmen establishment were under consideration and, if so, whether any proposals have been made;

(*c*) if it is a fact that the reorganization of a single subordinate service is under consideration and, if so, what scales are proposed and when they will be given effect to; and

(*d*) whether all the lower subordinates in the Public Works Department will be taken into the single subordinate service without any restriction.

A.—(*a*) The answer to the first part is in the negative. As regards the second part, the majority of draughtsmen posts were on incremental scales of pay before the reorganization and these posts were converted in the reorganization into posts of Upper and Lower Subordinates on fixed scales of pay. Consequently draughtsmen adversely affected by the new scales were granted personal allowances.

(*b*) Proposals for a further reorganization of the draughtsmen establishment were considered by the Chief Engineer in 1916 but were deferred owing to the financial stringency caused by the war.

(*c*) Proposals in regard to the formation of a single subordinate service are under consideration. The new service will be constituted as soon as certain details regarding pay, etc., which are under consideration are settled.

(*d*) The matter is under consideration.

Amelioration of depressed classes.

464 Q.—Rao Sahib P. C. ETHIRAJULU NAYUDU : To ask the Hon'ble the Law Member to state—

(*a*) what steps were taken in the Guntūr district for ameliorating the condition of the depressed classes in the matter of providing them with suitable building sites, good water-supply and educational facilities; and

(*b*) whether any grant was made for the purpose in favour of local bodies during the last three years.

A.—(*a*) No special steps have been taken by Government during the last three years but efforts made in 1917 to relieve congestion in villages met with little response. The Government propose to appoint an Assistant Commissioner of Labour for the district. The local bodies have continued to direct their attention to the matter.

(*b*) Yes, for house-sites and education.